

Executive Officer's Statement

December 13, 2007

A Year of Change

There is an old Buddhist saying "...change is the only constant." Certainly in this age of technology we are confronted with change on a daily basis. As I reflect upon this year, I realize what a year of change this has been for our organization. We all know that change is not easy, it causes discomfort, uncertainty and creates resistance. Knowing this and considering the significance and number of the changes that have been made this year; we have accomplished so much:

- In January we moved to our new headquarters building. A move is never easy but our move has so many benefits: the new location is in a safer neighborhood and more professional setting; the building is a modern facility; our rent is less; and we are all located on two floors in a more collaborative setting.
- In alignment with our mission to better serve claimants, this year we established a pilot program with the California Highway Patrol to process routine CHP claims on a consent agenda in the Government Claims program. Our Phone Center began a transition to a full service Customer Service Center in order to answer phone inquiries with immediate and complete information. One and done is the goal.
- To provide victims more assistance we added four new Criminal Restitution Compact counties to increase the imposition of restitution orders, we reduced the victim appeals' inventory to current year and offer in-person hearings for claimants. A new county advocate liaison position was established to work directly with non Joint Powers counties, an advocate 800 number was installed for better and faster communication between the program and advocates, and an advocate web page was launched to provide additional resources for advocates.
- In March we began the CaRES rollout to the 21 local Joint Powers partners. CaRES is the new web-based claims processing system. The statewide rollout was completed in mid-November. Every segment of the organization participated in this effort. Along with the implementation of CaRES in the counties, the rollout provided opportunities for our staff to mentor new users, work in county offices and across organizational sections.
- Our CaRES project brought additional opportunities that benefit victims, providers and our organization. We implemented a new scanning facility that reduces paper, developed a new "LiveCycle" application that will streamline processing, and launched an electronic interface with the State Controller's office that will quicken payments to providers as CaRES is refined. CaRES requires extensive technical expertise, sophisticated hardware and software; we now have a deeper and more experienced Information Technology Section along with current and robust software and hardware.

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- To address what one organization termed “the greatest workforce change in the past 100 years” and to weather the baby boomer retirements and turnovers, we are leveraging technology, strengthening organizational processes, and implementing our succession plan. We offered a variety of training opportunities that include technology training, general management courses, Human Resources training, team-building courses, cross training, and a four-day leadership training program for the executive management team.
- We launched an Awareness Campaign to educate the public about the Victim Compensation Program. Some of the efforts to raise awareness include bus shelters, billboards and yellow pages advertisements. Our brochures are enhanced and updated, our website is easier to navigate and contains more information, and we have a DVD with information about the program that I would like to show you.

This year of change has been remarkable and helped solidify our organization in an era of fast-paced and continual change. I want to thank our three Board members for their support, our staff for their flexibility, innovative ideas and commitment to service, and the executive staff and managers for their leadership.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

We participated in and/or exhibited at the following:

- Quarterly meeting of the Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee.
- Hosted a statewide California Crime Victim Assistance Association meeting for county Victim/Witness Assistance Center directors.
- Californians United to End Domestic Violence 2nd Annual Statewide Day of Remembrance event at the State Capitol.
- 65th Annual American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists Conference in Long Beach.
- Crime Survivors Inc. 5K Run/Walk - Health & Safety Expo in Los Alamitos.
- Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women in Long Beach.
- Dedication ceremony designating the Fresno County Probation Department Crime Victim Assistance Center facility as the James Rowland Crime Victim Assistance Center.
- San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office open house celebrating the District Attorney/Victim Witness Assistance office consolidation and the 30th anniversary of the program.
- Mental Health Association of San Diego's 10th Annual Behavioral Health Conference & Resource Fair in San Diego.
- Preventing Abuse Conference in Universal City sponsored by the Cedars Cultural and Educational Foundation.
- Hosted a meeting of the California Crime Victim Assistance Association Victim Compensation Committee.